

SB 457

05



# Our Garden Letters

To the Boys and Girls  
of the Civic League's  
first Garden Contest  
I dedicate these let-  
ters, mere messages  
from garden to garden  
by their humble  
Transcriber . . . . .



The sketches which  
illustrate my text  
and illuminate its  
meaning I gratefully  
acknowledge . . .

*Hortense Ferguson Childs*



21

As I read the prospectus of the Civic League's boys' and girls' garden competition and drink in the bounteousness of its promise, I am tempted to put into words—for the interested boys and girls—some of my thoughts born of the experience of years spent under the influence of beautiful gardens, and just such work as this contest is going to create here in Omaha.

If I were an Omaha boy or girl I know what I would do, and as the season is already far advanced, I will be brief in telling it, for many of the seeds that are to be sowed should be swelling in the moist earth at this moment. First of all, I would see that my father and mother read the preamble and rules, and sanctioned my entering the contest; then I would consider well the time and strength that would be needed, and if I felt a bit doubtful on the subject I would get my friends to help; next I would make out and mail the application with a rough little sketch of my home lot just as it is today to the Secretary at the City National bank building. If the house, fence, etc., needed painting, I would try to get my father to have them painted. Then I would examine very carefully the actual ground to be worked upon, and if it were hard and clayey, it might have to be plowed, and perhaps fertilized.

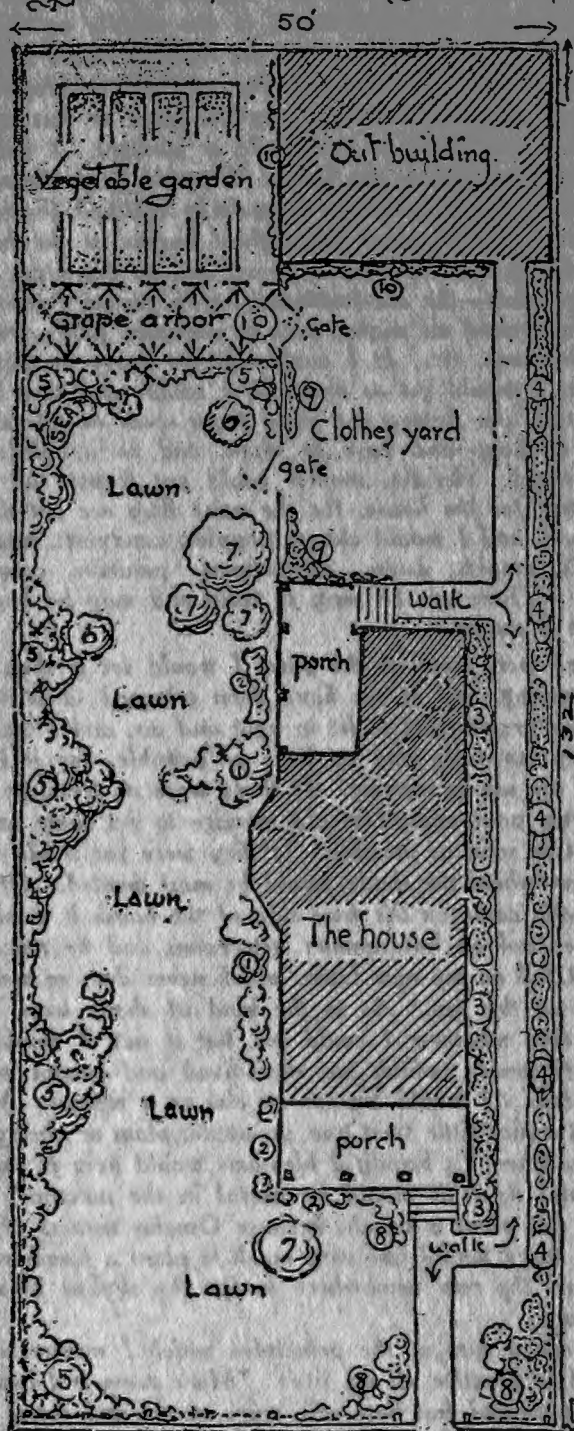
I would get someone who has a nice garden to look at it, and advise me about this, and most certainly I would take his or her advice; then I would think well about the actual work, for I would need to decide in what way I could improve it to the very best advantage. Of course, if there were no good grass, that should be the first thing to think of, and I would have just as much of the space in front of the house in grass as I could. Sodding is the best way to get it, but if that would cost more than I could put into it, I would seed it. Again I would get advice, or if I could not get any, I would spade and rake and work the ground until it was nice and fine and without big lumps; then I would get white clover and blue grass seed and oats, to one part blue grass, one-eighth clover and one-fourth oats, and sow the mixture all over the space prepared, spreading it as evenly as possible, and raking it under lightly with great care. If I could borrow a roller I would roll it, and if not, I would lay a flat board on it and walk on the board until it pressed the soil down, and I would do this all over the seeded part. I would be careful to water it regularly and thoroughly through a sprinkler, and the best time to water it would be in the evening.

The oats would come up first and shade the tender little grass shoots until they were able to stand the sun, and it will not need to be cut until I have time to write you another letter. Of course, I would decide upon the general plan of my garden and think out the various features which were to make it so lovable. I would visit the Public Library and consult the shelf of books on garden subjects that the Library has selected and placed in the reference room for the benefit of the contestants. I would discover that the word "garden" did not mean merely a dug-up piece of ground with the flowers or vegetables all planted in rows or beds, but that the whole lot when made a thing of beauty with grass and trees and shrubs and flowers was a "garden."

Next I would try to consider the essentials of a garden—its "purpose," in other words. Town gardens are first and



# A Suggestion for Planting a Town Lot



## Index

Nº1= Jap. Barberry and other low shrubs+ Nº2= Crim-  
son Rambler, Clematis Paniculata, and Hall's Honeysuck-  
le+ Nº3= Lilies of the valley and Pansies+ Nº4= Ferns  
and Columbine in variety; Ivy, gourds, and Morning-  
Glories on fence+ Nº5= Lilacs, Syringas, Weigelas, and other  
shrubs+ Nº6= Plum or Crab Apple+ Nº7= Trees for-  
shade+ Nº8= Low growing plants, as Paeonies, etc.+ Nº9=  
Sweet Peas and other annual vines+ Nº10= Grapes on lattice+

foremost a setting for a house, and its character, and its position on the lot must govern the treatment of the garden. If the house stands near the street, in the middle of the lot, or to one side, or if the lawn is on the north or south side of the house, these things must direct the garden's development, for one would have, as the case may be, more or less space for the garden, and more or less shade or sunlight. I will add a little suggestive plan to my letter. I would keep the center of my lawn open and plant an irregularly outlined shrubbery on its sides. I would plant the highest bushes at the back, the lower-growing ones in front of these, and on the edges I would plant perennials—the old-fashioned hardy garden flowers which live in the ground all winter, such as peonies, phlox, iris, hardy chrysanthemums, etc. If I could not get many perennials this first year, I would get as many as I could, and then I would use annuals, the flowers we raise from seed, as fillers. They would be cheap and easy to plant, and so delightful when they bloomed. Besides, mother could cut flowers all through the summer for the house, for the more they are cut the better they bloom, and I would choose poppies, candytuft, mignonette, marigolds, zinnias, asters, nasturtiums, pelunias, cosmos and verbenas. These are all easy to raise and may be bought for five cents a packet.

If there were trees on the place I would see if they did not need trimming, and if so, have them trimmed immediately to guide their growth and to let in light and air, and I would trim them very carefully and as little as possible, for it is rather late and the sap is running. If there were no trees, or at best, only a few poor ones, I would manage to get some and plant them just as soon as possible. If they were for shade I would plant them where the shade would be most wanted. Of course, if the shade came on the west side of the house it would make the house cool on hot summer afternoons and be much better than if it fell on my new lawn, which never does so well in the shade as in the sun. As to the kind of shade trees, I might have to take whatever I could get, but if not, I would try to avoid soft woods, which are short-lived and cannot withstand severe winds. I would try for an elm or a walnut. Maybe I could get a nice little fruit tree, an apple, plum or cherry, which would go where its beautiful blossoms would help in the spring effects, and its fruit would be useful in the autumn. I think I would not plant a peach, because Omaha winters are likely to kill it, but I would like very much to plant a Lombardy poplar toward the rear somewhere to lift the skyline in my garden picture.

Here are a few of the principles which I memorized early and tried to practice all my life: "More grass and less gravel, more flowers and less bare soil, more curves and fewer straight lines and angles, more hardy and not so many half-hardy plants, more arrangement and less disorder, more shrubs."

I wouldn't try to do too much at first. I am perfectly sure that the jury which would judge my garden would consider the thoroughness and seriousness of my work rather than the elaborateness of my garden design. I would try always to avoid the startling, freakish things, and endeavor to keep my garden simple. I think I would try to learn the full meaning of the word "fitness." I would submit every garden scheme that tempted me to that test word, and then if it passed the examina-

tion I would analyze it a little further; for instance, when I decided upon the varieties of trees to plant, I would consider those that were appropriate for a town lot, and the next step would be to consider if the trees were for shade, screens or shelter, or all three purposes. Evergreen trees which grow to any size are rarely suitable for the small town lot, they take up too much ground space and are usually too dominating. There should be in every garden little spots where the heart seems to have had its outpourings of love—specially considered and specially tended. We'll talk of those later.

If the family wanted it, I would provide for a practical vegetable garden at the rear of the lot somewhere, as the little plan suggests. The home might be only a rented place, but I would try to put the same effort into my garden work that I would if my father owned it, and give my garden the same care, for I would realize that I was learning the rudiments of a great art, that I was contributing something toward beautifying my home city and certainly preparing a better home for some one who might live there afterward. Moreover, that "some one" might be doing the same thing on some other lot for me, and, of course, I would not forget that I was striving for that seventy-five dollar prize.

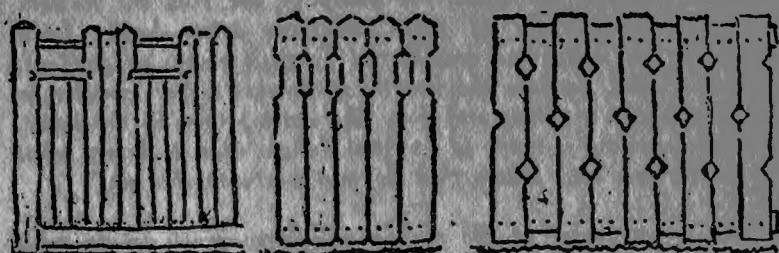
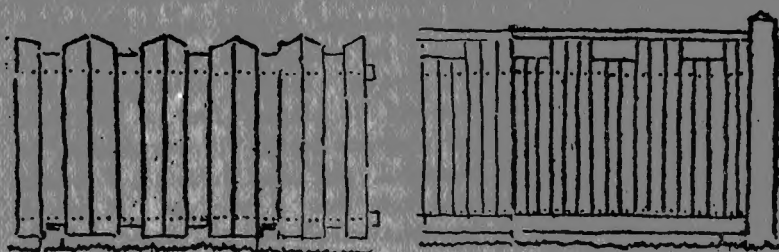


When I read my last week's letter in the *World-Herald* I realized how much there is to say and how difficult it is to get it all said in time if we are to apply it to our garden work this spring. Fortunately many things may be done yet if we hasten to the work. There is still time to plant trees, shrubs and perennials. When I spoke of tree trimming I did not say half that I should have said and that my love for the trees and my horror of tree-barbers make me want to be sure not to leave unsaid now. Remember that trees are individuals, each one has its own shape and manner of growing and should be trimmed only in its very own way. Pompadour is the favorite way of trimming all trees regardless of this, and I am perfectly sure that no tree ever lived that felt happy or looked well pompadoured. It is too late for general trimming, so work in this direction should be confined to cutting out the annual crop of sprouts and shoots, trimming off the straggling ends of branches that have grown too long for the best shape of the whole tree, and cutting out all dead wood. When branches are sawed or cut it is best to cover the wound with paint or liquid tar.

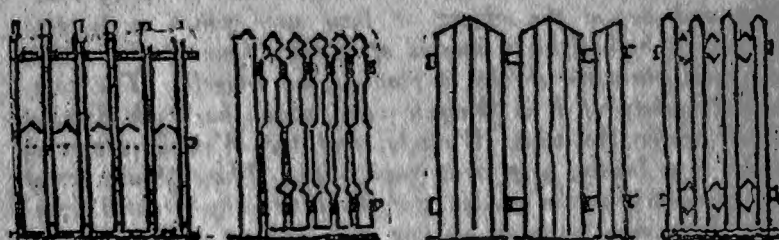
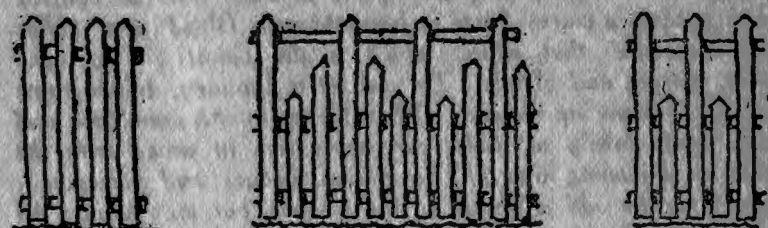
I am sure all those who have made a beginning are enthusiastic gardeners—in even a week's time. I was permitted to see a letter that one boy wrote and sent with his application. It was a revelation of how much a boy might know, and I shall feel no longer any hesitancy in saying almost anything, being quite sure that I am writing to comprehending, earnest gardeners. The garden instinct is not a suddenly acquired quality in any one. It is merely a discovery of something long repressed or overlooked. I am sure that at heart every one loves a garden. With just a little work, faithfully performed, the most barren lot may become wondrously beautiful, because a garden is very human, in that it returns the love that is given to it.

In the first letter we talked about the lawn, which someone has happily called the "heart of the garden," and a few general principles. Now, let us talk of a few particulars in garden making. We have discussed the proper places for trees, shrubs, and perennials, and I think we should next consider how to plant them. We will speak specially of the shrubs, the same method of planting applying to trees and perennials, varying only according to size. They should not be too large; smaller bushes overtake larger ones, which usually suffer a shock and a set-back by being moved. The ground should be carefully and thoroughly prepared and loosened to a depth of eighteen inches. Shrubs do not require such very rich soil, but if it is particularly poor a little fertilizer of some kind should be worked into it. Make the hole large enough for each tree or shrub to be planted so that the roots may be spread out horizontally, and then place finely pulverized earth immediately over them. When the hole is partially filled they should be watered to help to settle the earth, and then as the filling proceeds, gently press the ground around the roots with the foot, leaving a little loose earth as a final covering. The injured or bruised roots should be cut away just above the injury. The pruning of the bush depends upon its size and character. Advice should be sought in this matter until the new gardener becomes experienced. Most bushes are better for a little pruning, in fact require it, but a few, like the Pearl Bush, cannot tolerate it. All the knowledge necessary for the cultivation of such trees and shrubs as one is likely to plant on a

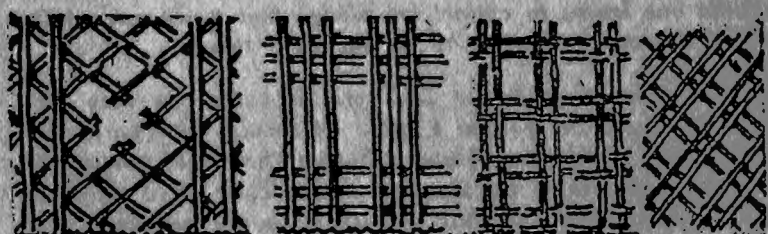
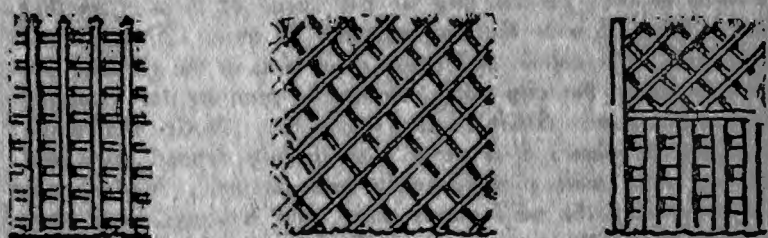
# SENSIBLE FENCES



Types of plain board fence



Types of picket fence

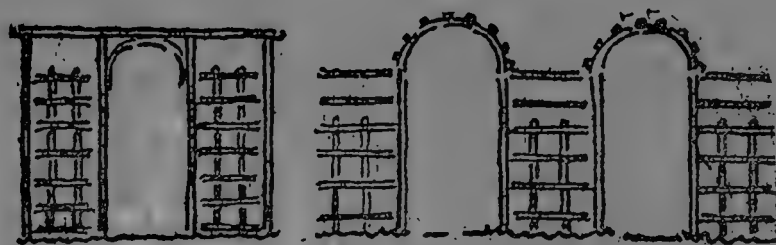


Types of lattice.

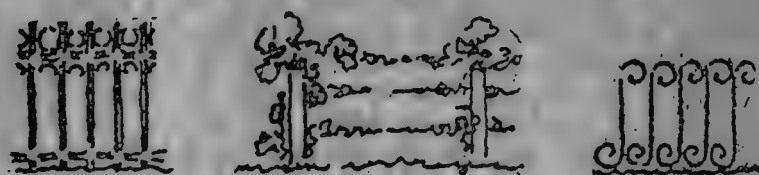
city lot is easily mastered. While the planting is going on, the roots of all plants should be protected from the air and sun. If they seem dry they should be soaked a little while in water before planting. Be sure not to cramp and overcrowd. It destroys the restfulness of a garden. Bushes which attain the height of five or six feet should be planted four or five feet apart. I would try to select fragrant bushes for my garden, as well as those which are beautiful, and most certainly I would plant a fragrant honeysuckle vine near a window. It would be no intrusion, when its sweetness steals into the house, wholly unlike a thief in the night, for many of the fragrant flowers give more bountifully of their sweetness after dark. Lord Bacon in his delightful, quaint old English essay on gardens, writes: "And because the breath of flowers is far sweeter in the air (where it comes and goes like music) than in the hand, therefore nothing is more fit for that delight than to know what be the flowers and plants that do best perfume the air."

The arrangement of the shrubs will have much to do with the artistic effect of the garden. Do not have too large an assortment. Have variety in their growth, flowers and foliage, but do not strive for a great variety in color, and so confuse your garden picture—keep it harmonious. Blend your colors and remember that white, which is the palest tint of each color, merges and blends. Do not let a Japanese quince come next to a flowering almond. They bloom at the same time and each, quite lovely in itself, can never live in peace with the other at blooming time. The golden, bronze and variegated-leaved shrubs add a charm to the garden, but they should be used cautiously, as anything so pronounced may be easily overdone and defeat the object of their use—which is to give touches of high light in masses of green. One of the easiest and most attractive shrubs to plant is the weigela. The commonest variety of it is, *Weigela rosa*, which has pink flowers, but I prefer the white *Weigela*; and the *Weigela Desboisi*, which is a lovely, soft, deep rose color. These shrubs tempt dainty visitors to the garden, for the little ruby-throated humming bird may be seen darling and poisoning airily over the flowers, while he slips his little slender bill into their long tubes to sip their honey. There are many ways of attracting the birds to one's garden, and we will speak of them at another time. Avoid flowers that are magenta in tone. They do not blend with other colors, and cause color riots in the garden. As you wander in the city parks, study the planting for grouping and combinations. Study Nature's way too. Notice that while she plants in masses, it is never with sharply defined lines, and that one tone melts imperceptibly into another. Notice, too, how generously the wild plants share their holdings, as if they had discovered the true spirit of ideal community life. Little by little one learns to extract knowledge that trains one's taste until it becomes instinctive to do the right thing.

Avoid geometrical flower beds on the lawn, for they disfigure it. Keep the garden a unit. It should have parts, but these should merge and blend. Soften the angle where the house joins the lawn by planting shrubs close to it or vines on it. There should be little sequestered nooks with seats that tempt one to drop into them for rest. I will have little sketches of arbors and seats in my next letter. There should be no



Combinations of boards, pickets and lattice



Types of iron and wire.

spot in the garden from which one could see everything in it at once. Curiosity is not a sin in a garden—stimulate it!

Planting the shrubbery along the fence conceals the boundary of the garden, and gives it the aspect of greater extent. And this brings me to the subject of fences. There are three general classes according to their purposes—enclosing, division, and special. Enclosing fences in towns or cities are those that separate the lots from the streets and alleys. On the street they should not only protect, but be ornamental. Division fences may be mere markers, or a continuation of the enclosing fence with all its functions. In the special class are those for special purposes, such as masking or screening objects, and trellises for the support of vines. Fences may be of wood, iron, brick or stone, or simply planted hedges. I append some sketches of types of fences that are easy to make. Almost any boy with mechanical tendencies can make most of them. When it is necessary to have a tight board fence at the rear or side, even that may be made an attractive feature of the garden simply by the way in which we saw the boards.



Then there are the walks to be considered. The real impression of a walk is that of pushing its way across the open, or through the planting, and not that the walk was laid first and the shrubs and flowers planted afterward and accordingly. Be sure when the walk has a curve that it is for some apparent reason—the planting must account for it, and therefore group some shrubs on the inside of the curve if nothing else is there. Sometimes the edges may be defined by planting; especially with annuals and other flowers that are to be gathered in rainy weather. The path may be of board, gravel, brick or tile, or even of stepping stones. In general it should go very directly to the object to which it leads, and should always approach the object at right angles, and should never be wider than necessary. Brick walks are rather the best of all for inside-the-lot lines, and stay and look best laid in herring-bone pattern. One advantage of a brick walk is its peculiarity of taking on the look of its surroundings.

In my first letter I cautioned you against the use of the freakish, startling things. I did not mean that you should shun the strong and striking effects altogether—one needs focusing points—I did mean that you should avoid the grotesque. A garden would be monotonous and uninteresting that did not seek to produce variety and contrast. Seek this in color or in form effects in the class of things selected, and by massing, having quantities of some things, for which your garden may acquire some little fame and you the reputation of knowing so much about the needs of those plants that you will be considered an authority. Do not hesitate to go begging for knowledge or plants. The greatest joy a true gardener experiences is being able to share both. I am sure that many a dream garden is destined to become real, and many a boy and girl will find that other beautiful things than plants grow in them.

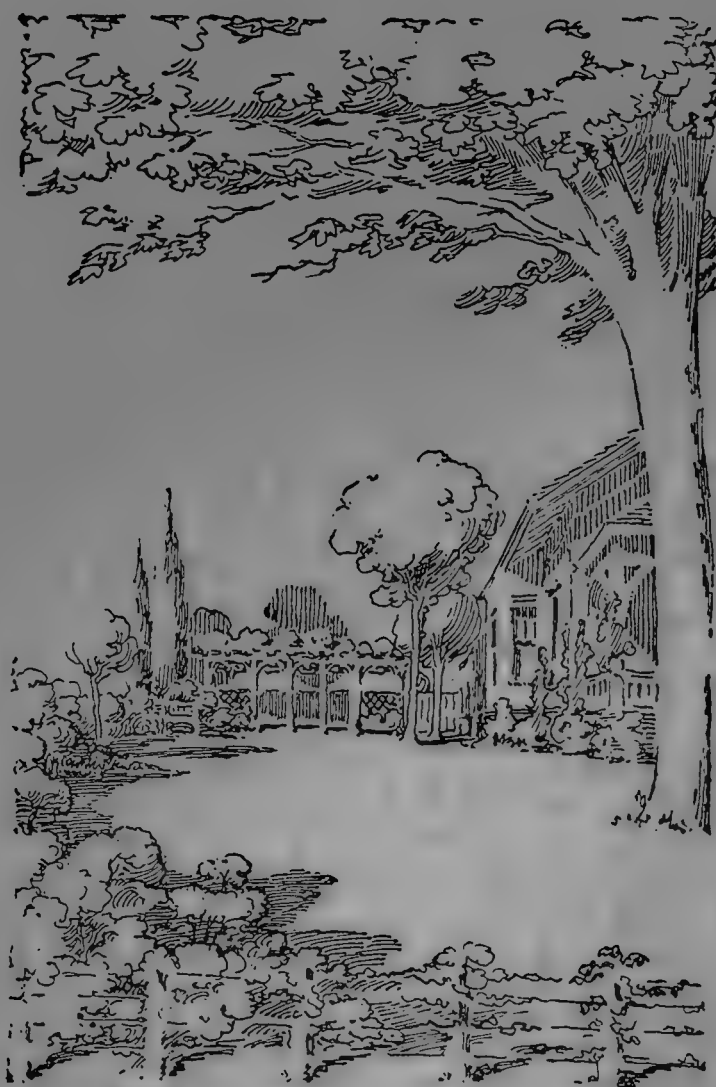


# THE HISTORY OF A HOUSE

The history of a house is a story of many generations. It is a story of the people who have lived in it, of the events that have shaped it, and of the changes that have come about over time. The house is a witness to the passage of time, and its story is one of enduring significance.

The house was built in the year 1750, and it has since been the home of many families. It has seen the birth and death of many people, and it has been the scene of many happy and sad events. The house is a part of the lives of the people who live in it, and its story is one of enduring significance.

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## The Lawn as a picture

Perhaps some of the boys and girls have kept the little garden plan that accompanied my first letter, and I will ask them to step into that garden and walk there with me.

We will enter from the street and notice that the planting by the gate gives the entrance a homey, cosy look which comes, I think, from two causes: one probably because the planting seems to part to let us in, and the other from a sense of privacy. Instead of going to the house, we will turn aside into the garden, and when we look over the lawn and its beautiful even carpet of uninterrupted green to the shrubbery margins, we will realize why it is called "the heart of the garden." It offers us such peace and understanding as can only come from the heart, whether it is nature's offering or a human gift.

We will follow along the edges of the shrubbery bordering the side fence, and we will find ever so many bushes in bloom—lilacs, Japanese quince, the earliest spiraeas, bush honeysuckles and many more coming. These bushes are at the back of the shrubbery, and so we note that the highest-growing ones are

where the border is the widest, because where it recedes into little coves or bays the planting should be lower. Just as the land seems to be highest, where there are promontories on the sea coast, so there should be bolder planting on the promontories of the shrubbery. But the little coves! I love them best. There should always be a surprise in store for one in those, because they are the mysteries of the little garden—the parts we do not see until we come to them, and some choice flowers, some lovely combination, some little lure should captivate and hold us there, or something tempting like a berry bush or a few strawberry plants tucked in on the edge might add a bit of sweetness that pleases another sense than that of sight.

Of course, there are tulips in bloom in the garden now, scattered all along the edges of the border. How much prettier they are growing in a naturalized way than in beds! I know every boy and girl will resolve to plant tulip bulbs this autumn so they may have them next spring. There are little colonies of daffodils just going by, and the same boys and girls will have these too. All this lovely lawn was starred with crocuses earlier, and so we wait a bit until their leaves ripen some before we mow it. The garden is full of the promise of other things, for the flower buds are swelling on so many shrubs and plants.

The Irises, those garden orchids, will soon be in bloom, and the first of the tall varieties is the delicate silver gray Florentine. I wonder how many of the boys and girls know thatorris root is ground from the root of this Iris? The Columbines, too, are shooting up, and will soon give showers of pendulous bloom in lovely, dainty colors. The paeonies are full of buds and I am sure the blossoms will be extra large and full, for some one has dug well-rotted manure all round the roots for them to feed upon. Toward the back, hollyhocks are getting strength from the enriched soil to send up spires of gay flowers a little later. Here is a perfect love spot of forget-me-nots and over there on the edge I catch a glimpse of a cheery little mass of English daisies.

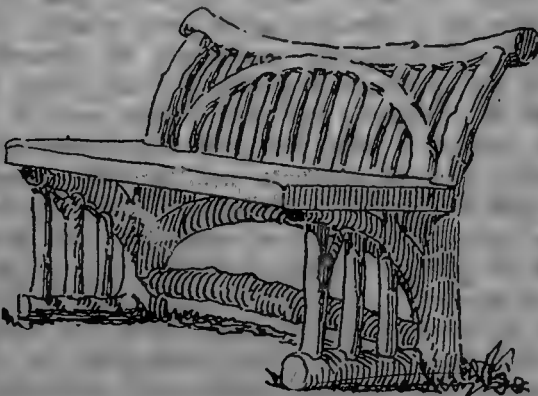
Beyond is a fine plant of the precious old-fashioned Bleeding Heart. How we love the things that grew in our grandmothers' gardens! and I wonder if we were to name the flowers today if we could give them the quaint, sweet-sounding names that our grandmothers and their grandmothers gave them. Let us cling to the old names and leave the Latin ones to the botanist. Here are large clumps of golden glow to brighten a dark corner, but I fear there are enemies at work. The little fallen shoots tell a sad tale, and betray the presence of the cut-worm. The gardener must dig carefully about the roots hunting for the destroyers and the sentence must be "death." Coal ashes worked in about the roots are recommended, but I much prefer a personal encounter with the little demons. The boys and girls who entered in the contest should now be watchful. The pests will soon be at work, for most plants have enemies to be guarded against, and they will soon be on the ground and are full of wicked energy. This, however, is to be borne in mind—a garden well cared for with strong, healthy plants has not much to fear from pests, for the ounce of prevention lies in faithful, constant care, loosening the soil, watering when necessary, and keeping out the weeds. Remember that our plants are our garden guests and that we should



treat them with due hospitality, receiving them upon those terms of formality or intimacy to which their rank in the flower kingdom entitles them.

Some little spots on the edges of the shrubbery look bare just now. They are the places to be filled in with annuals for the summer bloom, as most of the perennials give us early flowers, and each season should contribute its share. The border is such a lovely, fascinating thing! If I could not buy bushes and perennials this year, I would still have a border. I would make it all of annuals, planting the tallest things at the back, and graduating to the tiniest dwarf Tom Thumb nasturtiums and sweet alyssum on the edges. I would go out into the country and seek the wild flowers, always being careful to ask the owner's permission to dig them, for many persons love these wild flowers in their natural places, and are not ungenerous when they decline to have them dug. Besides, the roadsides offer many treasures, and there the lives of the little plants are endangered so that digging them and taking them to a garden is really a rescue. The struggle for existence being lessened, the plants improve marvelously, so much that sometimes they are scarcely recognizable. The wild hemp, which grows so abundantly here, would be effective in the border. The English plant it for its delicate, graceful foliage, and there are the butterfly weed—could anything be more gorgeous?—the purple cone flower, the iron weed, the wild roses, the snake root (which florists raise in greenhouses in winter), and the wonderful variety of asters, besides many other things.

To the boys and girls who are in the Civic League garden contest, I am sure time must be fairly galloping. To every true gardener it always gallops at this time of year, but there is still time to do many things, and there is still a full week to enter the contest, for it is open until May fifteenth. It is never too late to plant the wild things from the woods, and nothing could be nicer than to have one shaded spot wholly devoted to the wood flowers. I feel sure that those who have wild violets in profusion will gladly share them with any boy or girl who wishes them for his or her garden. Great clumps can be transplanted without stopping their blooming if only we take them up carefully with a good ball of earth squeezed tightly around their roots. Keep them moist and shaded and water well after





planting and you will be surprised to see what a showing they will make. In the woods about Omaha there are blue, white, and yellow violets, adder's tongues, Dutchman's breeches, wild plox, bloodroot, sometimes a dainty lady slipper for the hunting, and many, many more, all worth having for near neighbors. There are other things which live in the woods that would be sweet neighbors too if only we could persuade them to come and live in the new garden. It is for just this thing that we are working, making a livable place, livable for birds as well as ourselves.

Cosy little seats, clever arbors and trellises and vases all make it attractive to people. A little drinking pool or fountain would make it much sought by our bird friends who are such excellent assistant gardeners. Little houses for them can be arranged in the garden, oh! so easily, and the chance of a tenant is very good. Jennie Wren can hardly resist an old tomato can if it has just the right sized door bent down to form a convenient little porch, the whole securely fastened in a tree crotch. Bluebirds sometimes come to a tin can home, and both wrens and bluebirds are exquisite musicians. A little winter and early spring feeding gives your lot a bird reputation for true hospitality. You might try it by sawing off the ends of a cocoanut, filling it with suet through which a twig is pushed for a perch, the whole to hang in a raffia swing near some



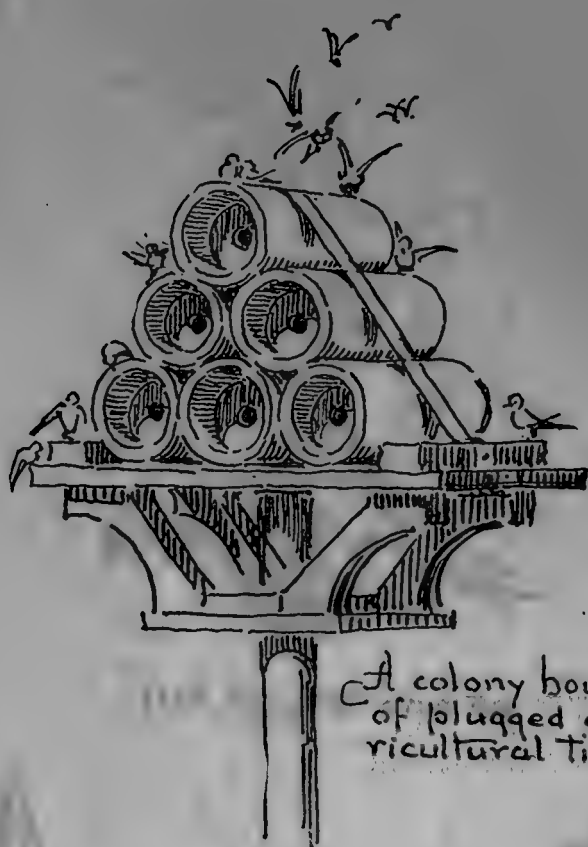
A blue bird's  
palace  
with  
cat guard

The same house  
for wren or  
robin

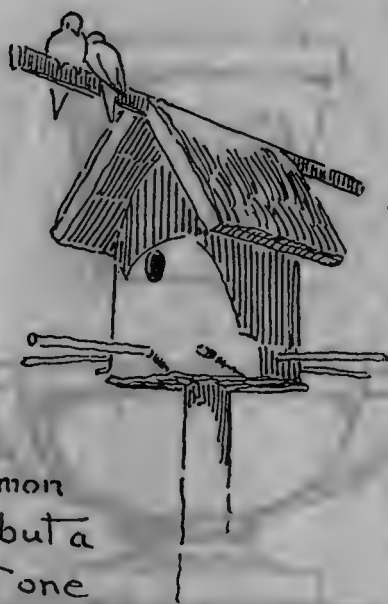
The door to be  
the size of a  
quarter for a  
wren.

window where the feasting can be enjoyed by the family too. There are so many things to add to the lure of the garden and I shall try to have sketches of a few of them to go with this letter. I add drawings of quite a number of bird houses, for I am so very fond of the birds myself, but you should be sure to have a cat guard around the supporting pole or tree; otherwise it means a nestful of little birds fed to the cat.

Maybe there would be places for window boxes and hanging baskets. They help to bring the house and lot together. An ordinary shallow flower pot eight or ten inches in diameter hung in a strong wire frame to a screw hook above and filled with plants that echo the colors of the garden below makes a good substitute for the most costly basket one can buy. Nasturtiums of the right colors to go with the house, say red for a green house, yellow for a yellow one and white for any color, with Wandering Jew, plain and variegated, and a geranium of a color to go with its neighbors; then a bit of some sweet-smelling thing like lemon verbena, and a little filling of sweet alyssum, and the thing is quite complete. I show such a basket among the appended sketches—(or if the basket is planted only with asparagus fern, or oxalis, or yellow myrtle, it would be simple and just as pretty). If I had a very nice place for a vase or two, I would pick out one of rather simple form, and not too large, such as either of those sketched.



A colony house  
of plugged ag-  
ricultural tiles



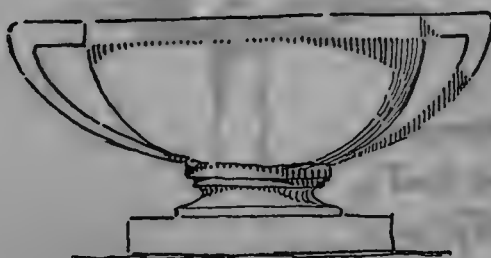
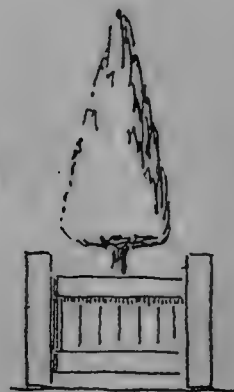
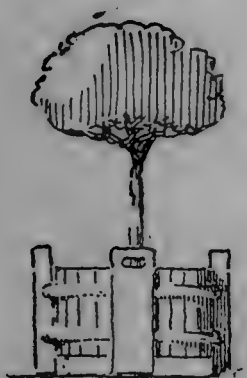
A common  
type but a  
pretty one

If I could not spend the money this year for vases I would make square tubs out of boards and paint them a pleasant green. In some gardens there may be a chance to have a pergola, so I add a sketch of a simple one. The pergola





A birds' banquet Hall



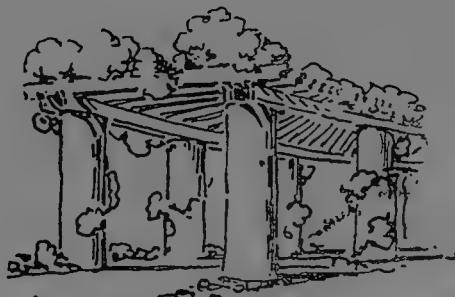
Acceptable types of Vases and tubs

columns may be of ordinary twelve-inch drain tile, plastered on the outside and left white. The grape arbor in the garden we are visiting might easily be made into a little tea house, opening on the side toward the lawn, paving the floor with

bricks and giving it a little furniture—a table and some benches as the accompanying sketch suggests.

I doubt if a sun-dial properly belongs on a city lot, which has more or less the spirit of modernity. A sun-dial should suggest the charm of venerableness, and I believe belongs strictly in larger gardens where some quaintness may be given to its setting, and where age may seem to give it a closer kinship with its surroundings and a deeper sentiment, for of all garden embellishments it must not be incongruous.





A simple pergola.

I said in my first letter that large evergreens are rarely suited to the small town lot. There are a few small evergreens that add beauty to the shrubbery, but they are difficult to please. They need clean, pure air, and until Omaha is able to abolish the smoke nuisance, it is better not to attempt to plant them in such smoky, sooty atmosphere, for it would only enfeeble their growth and shorten their lives.

I have given much space in this letter to the subject of garden embellishments, feeling that when carefully chosen such evidences of human life in the garden lend a charm without which no garden approaches completeness—though no garden should ever really arrive there—and if we cannot have all of them, perhaps we may have some, and at any rate we are training our minds to conceive and our tastes to reject or select.



A suggestion for a summer tea house.



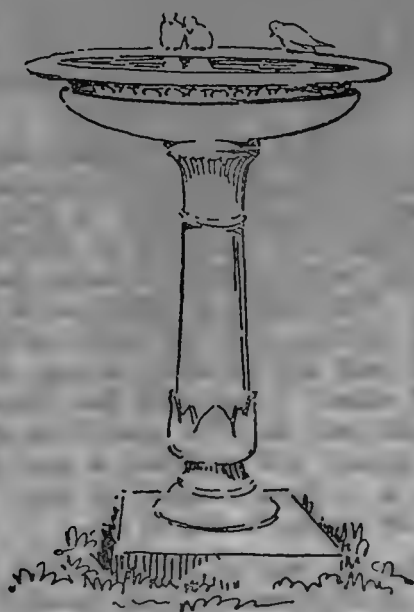




### One good and two bad profiles -

My personal interest in the little "contest gardens" has so grown during the writing of these weekly letters that I have quite made up my mind to take a secret peep at each one, and to hope that when I do see them their little owners will be busily at work making them more beautiful. You see when the garden has arrived at the point where it can really call itself a garden it becomes too personal a thing for letter writing, so I shall let this letter be the last for this year. There are a few things still to say, and I shall try to get most of them into this letter.

I am including, with some grading profiles, a sketch of a terraced approach and plans for a practical cat-proof bird-bath or pool of easy manufacture, also a graceful tall one that may be had in the market by those who prefer to have a more pretentious ornament of this sort. In our lot-improvement work this year, it is probably quite beyond the contestant's reach to make much change in the actual way the house is placed on the ground, but I am sure we should consider the question. It is by just such observation and study that we educate ourselves.



The tall kind of bird fountain

In my second letter I told how the actual angle of the house with the ground might be softened and hidden by planting. Maybe by a little grading, matters may be bettered still further. For example: When your house sits up on a high terrace, the ground should slope away from the house to the street in an easy curve as shown in figure A, and not as in either figure B or C. It needs no argument to make one feel sure that the house should be on the highest ground, to prevent rain water from running toward it. It is equally true that the slopes should be as easy as possible, for on steep ones, grass has an unhappy time, and is dreadfully hard to cut. Then if it is very steep, hard rains will wash it away, so when the house is much higher than the street, a simple wall is far the best way to treat it, for it does away with all these troubles and makes a wider space for a lawn, and one that is less public. Of course the problem varies in difficulty as the difference in grades varies. One little sketch shows how a very high lot may be treated by planting, to make a thing of beauty out of what is almost always an eyesore.

By this time many of the seeds will have sprouted, and the necessity for thinning them must be given attention. All growing things need room, and overcrowding means exhaustion of the soil and hungry little, half-starved plants. By being

careful in thinning them you can have quite a number of extra ones to give to some other gardener who has not been so fortunate. I am sure the jury will want to take into account all such acts and to hear of every case where one of the gardeners has helped another and so had a hand in making two beauty spots instead of one; and that reminds me to suggest that each contestant keep a notebook with every day's doings and progress jotted down for use and guidance another year, for that is one of the best things that will come out of the season's work, and I have an idea that the prize winners will be asked to write for the jury a simple little story of how he or she made the garden so beautiful that it won a prize. Maybe such little stories will be published in the newspapers to help the new contestants next year.

In keeping a garden record note the blooming time of each shrub or plant. It helps so much in arranging combinations for another year. Flowers are more beautiful in their effects if they have a background or a foil. All go charmingly with green, for the eye has formed the habit of seeing things against a green background. Yellow gives us sunlight and is admissible everywhere. Harsh yellows make too much sunlight; grays and pale lilac look well with all colors, because gray is the combination of all colors. Orange and blue intensify each other and go well with each other; the same is true of red and green, yellow and purple. Let no flower in your garden be other than a note in a beautiful chord of color. If it is inharmonious, have the courage to drop it out.

In training climbers, we must let them have their own way very largely. It is an indulgence not to be regretted, for their caprices and humors are their graces. We must give them the proper support in the way of loving guidance, not harsh dictation, for if we control and restrain them too much we give them a stiff, self-conscious little air, as if they were out of place and felt it. Some are strong and sturdy, others are fine and delicate. We should choose the right vine for the right place and then let it make its own little delightful efforts to make itself at home and express the joyousness of its life. Many an unsightly old building may be made a thing of beauty with the help of vines. There are climbing roses, Virginia creeper, clematis, honeysuckle, wistaria, trumpet-creeper, morning-glories, moon vine, gourds, and oh, so many more! We must not forget the wild grape. I would not be without its fragrance in my garden—the most exquisite in all nature—floating out from little unseen flowers, a “chastened sweetness” which some one has said “seems like the air of heaven falling in a benediction.” This easily procured vine has so many virtues to commend it to our favor. It grows quickly and retains its beautiful spring-like green far into the autumn months.

No one thing will prove such an attraction to bird neighbors as a safe place where they may bathe and drink. One little pool so placed as to be seen from the windows of the house will give the little folks who live there a constant example of the two most important uses of water, an example that most little “humans” can well afford to study carefully. To be really successful such a pool must be properly made and so planned as to be a safe place from the cat, who, of course,



A garden pool



Diameter three feet or more on inside — — —  
 Depth over all not less than fourteen inches — — —  
 Depth of water at deepest points six inches. — — —  
 Border stones may be thin flagging or of brick

has rights that must be considered as well as limited. Our pool must be so made that it can be easily drained, cleaned and supplied with fresh water, and must be good to look at, too. The location determined, scoop out the basin as near the shape of the section shown as possible, deep at the edges and with a high place in the middle. After shaping, carefully plaster it all over with a mortar of thick Portland cement and sand (one of cement to three of sand), then bend into shape strips of

ordinary chicken wire netting with one continuous band all around the edge, press this into the cement and stay it in place, letting the wire overlap everywhere; cover this with two inches more of the cement mortar, finishing and brushing the surface as smooth and even as possible; form the round cup in the center about an inch deep and ten inches across; this comes at the highest point where the water is most shallow, and is to receive from time to time a fresh layer of sod for a bath rug.

By reference to the section, sizes and depths can be determined, and the outside form can be made to best suit the place chosen for it. The water line is a very important thing and should be kept five inches below the top of the outside rim, so that the birds will not be tempted to risk feeding the cat by lighting on the rim to drink. One or two little pebbles placed on the sod and coming just above the water will provide a perfectly safe and dry footing to drink from. The pool should be at least three feet in its smallest diameter and may be as much larger as the builder chooses to make it, and should be the home of at least two small fish, as a precaution against hatching mosquitoes. Pigmy water lilies will thrive wonderfully in the three-inch earth and sand bottom of this pool. We should consider the birds when we plant our shrubs and trees, and select some of those varieties which provide fruit and berries for the birds to feast upon.

At first, in our garden work, we must be imitators more or less and borrow our ideas, but as time goes on and we acquire knowledge through experience we should venture to be experimental. By that time we will have learned the fundamental principles which will keep us from committing very serious garden sins, and we must let our own individuality dominate a little in our gardens, because it is that personal quality that gives a garden its recognized, felt, though subtle charm. If you are told that certain plants will not grow in Nebraska gardens and you have reason to think that perhaps they might be coaxed to grow in yours, do not hesitate to try. Sometimes it is only a matter of the right exposure, or of satisfying the little hunger needs of the plant, or of drainage, or of winter protection.

I know a western garden to which a large number of Madonna lily bulbs were sent from an old Manor-house garden in the east one August (which is the proper time for planting them), and when they were put into the ground they had the required handful of sand under each. They rooted quickly and sent up the healthiest tufts of leaves, but that was all they did for five years. They were about to receive their order of banishment, when some little instinct, or some last effort to keep them, led the gardener, who so longed to cherish them, to clear the earth carefully away around each bulb without disturbing the roots and to fill in around each liberally with sand. Almost instantly they began to send up their tall wands, and at the proper time they burst into glorious bloom. In the height of all their beauty, as difficult as it was, they were cut and sent to a friend whose appreciation warranted whatever sacrifice was made, but the gardener was seen to close her eyes when she did it.

Work joyously and diligently in your garden, but loiter idly



in it too. That is the time when the inspirations come, the thoughts that materialize into those lovely features of your garden. Take a little stool out into it, move it about, and study your garden from every point of view, for in that way it becomes a series of pictures. The painter's and the gardener's arts are closely allied. There should be the effect of naturalness, care and simplicity in the work of each—the concealed art—"the simple truth, miscalled simplicity." While one works with paint in creating his picture, the other works with living pigments, but Ruskin has said so beautifully that this "human art can only flourish where its dew is Affection; its air, Devotion; the rock of its roots, Patience, and its sunshine, God." It is sad to think that there are those who are deprived of the joy of garden work, and who never know the beauty of its revelations and its cheer.

The summer is coming to more than fulfill the promise of the spring, and then the autumn will come with a kind of sweet garden pensiveness when the garden goes to sleep and we blanket it where it needs it. While it rests we will make new plans, and in those winter days when you walk mentally in the vision of a new and more beautiful garden, though I make my little bow to you now, I shall walk there with you.

*Adieu*



*End of itself, the garden shuts its gate  
 On him that's hard, cold, uncompassionate;  
 But opens wide its portals, green and still,  
 To sesame of love and fair good will...*

## The Most Satisfactory Shrubs

Almond, double flowering (*Prunus Japonica*). May.  
Althaea, in variety. August and September.  
\*Barberry in variety.  
Burning-bush (*Euonymus atropurpureus*).  
Chinese double rose-flowering Crab (*Prunus Japonica*). May.  
\*Deutzia gracilis. June.  
Forsythia, in variety. May.  
Golden Currant (*Ribes aureum*). May.  
Honeysuckle, Tartarian (*Lonicera Tartarica*). May.  
Hydrangea paniculata grandiflora. August and September.  
\*Indian Currant (*Symphoricarpus vulgaris*). July.  
Japanese Quince (*Cydonia Japonica*). May.  
Judas-tree (*Cercis Canadensis*). May.  
Lilac (*Syringa*) in variety. May.  
Rosa rugosa. Entire season.  
\*Snowberry (*Symphoricarpus racemosus*).  
Snowball (*Viburnum Opulus var. sterilis*). May.  
Spiraea, callosa alba. July.  
Spiraea, callosa. July.  
Spiraea, lanceolata. June.  
Spiraea prunifolia flore pleno. May.  
Syringa, Mock-orange (*Philadelphus Coronarius*). June.  
Tamarisk (*Tamarix Chinensis*).  
Tamarisk (*Tamarix Africana*).  
Weigela (*Diervilla*) in variety. June.

## Hedge Plants

Japanese Barberry (*Berberis Thunbergii*).  
Honeysuckle, Tartarian (*Lonicera Tartarica*).  
Locust, Honey (*Gleditschia triachanthos*).  
Mulberry, Russian.  
Osage Orange (*Maclura aurantiaca*).  
Quince, Japanese (*Cydonia Japonica*).  
Rosa rugosa.

## Perennials

Asters (*Michaelmas Daisies*), in variety.  
Bellis perennis (English Daisy).  
Bleeding-Heart.  
Bocconia (Plume Poppy).  
Boltonia.  
Chrysanthemums in variety.  
Columbines in variety.  
Coreopsis.  
Day Lily.  
Foxglove.  
Gaillardia.  
Hardy Grasses in variety.  
Hibiscus.  
Hollyhocks.  
Iris in variety.  
Larkspurs in variety.

\*Grows well in shade.

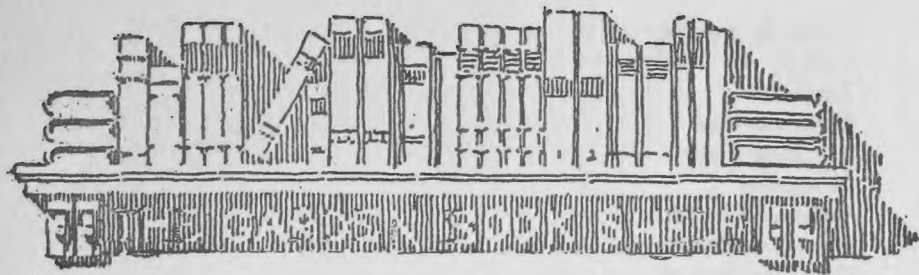
*Lilies in variety.*  
*Lily of the Valley.*  
*Lychnis.*  
*Meadow-Rue.*  
*Meadow-Sweet.*  
*Monarda.*  
*Oriental Poppy.*  
*Paeonies in variety.*  
*Phlox in variety.*  
*Physostegia.*  
*Plantain Lily.*  
*Platycodon.*  
*Pyrethrum.*  
*Rudbeckia.*  
*Sedum.*  
*Sweet Rocket.*  
*Sweet William.*  
*Veronica.*  
*Vinca.*  
*Yucca.*

## Hardy Vines

*Ampelopsis Engelmanni.*  
*Ampelopsis quinquefolia (Virginia Creeper).*  
*Akebia quinata.*  
*Aristolochia Sipho (Dutchman's Pipe).*  
*Celastrus scandens (Bitter Sweet).*  
*Clematis paniculata.*  
*Climbing Roses—*  
     *Crimson Rambler.*  
     *Dorothy Perkins. Pink.*  
     *Wichuriana. White.*  
     *Setigera. Rose.*  
*Lonicera (Honeysuckle) in variety.*  
*Lycium, Chinese (Matrimony Vine).*  
*Lathyrus latifolius (Perennial Pea).*  
*Bignonia radicans (Trumpet-creeper).*  
*Wistaria, both blue and white.*  
*Wild Grape.*

## Annual Vines

*Balloon Vine.*  
*Cobea Scandens.*  
*Gourds in variety.*  
*Humulus Japonicus, var. Variegatus (Japanese Hop).*  
*Ipomoea Noctifolia (Moon Flower).*  
*Ipomoea purpurea (Morning Glory).*  
*Nasturtium in variety.*  
*Phaseolus multiflorus (Scarlet Runner Bean).*  
*Tropaeolum Canariense (Canary-bird Vine).*



- "A Garden With House Attached" ..Brooks*  
*"A Plea for Hardy Plants".....J. Wilkinson Elliott*  
*"A Woman's Hardy Garden".....Helena Rutherford Ely*  
*"Another Hardy Garden Book".....Helena Rutherford Ely*  
*"Book of the Wild Garden".....S. W. Fitzherbert*  
*"Common Sense Gardens".....Sewell*  
*"Gardening for Beginners".....E. T. Cook*  
*"Gardening for Pleasure".....Henderson*  
*"Gardens of England".....Charles Holme*  
*"Hardy Plants for Cottage Gardens".Helen R. Albee*  
*"How to Lay Out a Garden".....Kemp*  
*"How to Make a Flower Garden"*  
*(Collected articles published by*  
*Doubleday, Page & Co.)*  
*"Italian Gardens" .....C. A. Platt*  
*"Landscape Gardening" .....Gilpin*  
*"Landscape Gardening" .....Kern*  
*"Landscape Gardening" .....Milner*  
*"Landscape Gardening" .....Parsons*  
*"Little Gardens" .....Charles M. Skinner*  
*"Manual of Gardening".....L. H. Bailey*  
*"Ornamental Gardening" .....Long*  
*"Our Gardens" .....Dean Hole*  
*"The Art of Landscape Gardening" ..Nolen*  
*"The Book of the Cottage Garden" ..Charles Thonger*  
*"The English Flower Garden".....W. Robinson*  
*"The Flower Garden".....Ida D. Bennett*  
*"The Formal Garden in England" ...Blomfield and Thomas*  
*"The Garden and Its Accessories" ...Loring Underwood*  
*"The Garden Beautiful".....W. Robinson*  
*"The Garden That I Love".....Alfred Austin*  
*"The Garden, You and I".....M. O. Wright*  
*"The Landscape Gardening Book" ...Grace Tabor*  
*"The Rescue of an Old Place".....Mary C. Robbins*  
*"The Seasons in a Flower Garden" ..Louise Shelton*

Most of these books are to be found at the Omaha Public Library.

*"And better must all childhood be*  
*That knows a garden and a tree"*  
*Bourdillon—*



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